

#### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 1-6 are amended. New claims 7-20 are submitted for consideration.

In response to the Office Action, favorable reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested. The Office Action objects to claims 1 and 4, and rejects claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, due to language in need of clarification. In addition, claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by JP 10-23995 (the JP '995 reference). In addition, although not specifically listed in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102, the Office Action apparently also intends to reject claims 5 and 6. For the reasons set forth in detail below, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance.

The specification is revised for improved grammar. In addition, the claims are amended for improved clarity and to obviate the objection and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that the claims patentably distinguish over the prior art as discussed further below.

Claim 1 recites the features in which a stationary plate is provided for attachment to a rear top surface of the toilet bowl, with the case mounted to the plate with a male-and-female connection, and further, the male-and-female connection is underneath a bottom of the case such that the connection is concealed at least when the toilet seat device is in a retracted position. This feature is not disclosed or suggested in the JP '995 reference. Accordingly, claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

The Office Action specifically points to the JP '995 arrangement of Figure 2(c). However, this arrangement provides a pivot located at the sides of the device, and thus, is undesirable for the reasons discussed in the present specification. There is no suggestion in the JP '995 arrangement as to the provision of a connection underneath a bottom of the case

in the form of a male-and-female connection between the case and a stationary plate which is attached to a rear top surface of the toilet bowl -- with the connection concealed at least when the device is in a retracted position.

Claim 2 also patentably distinguishes over the JP '995 arrangement. In particular, claim 2 recites that the case is detachably coupled to the stationary plate such that the case can be detached from the coupling with the stationary plate and slid toward a front of the toilet bowl with a non-pivoting movement. By contrast, the JP '995 arrangement specifically provides a pivoting mount as shown in JP '995 Fig. 2. Moreover, as discussed in the present specification, such an arrangement can be particularly problematic from a standpoint of potential breakage. In addition, such an arrangement is less than optimal in terms of handling the case for cleaning or maintenance. For example, as also discussed in the present specification, such an arrangement can be undesirable in that the case can contain water which could risk leakage or other problems upon pivoting. It is respectfully submitted that the JP '995 reference fails to disclose or suggest the features of claim 2. Therefore, claim 2 is also in condition for allowance.

New independent claim 18 also patentably distinguishes over the cited references. In accordance with the features of claim 18, a locking device is provided to selectively lock and unlock the case in the rearward position. This feature can assure maintenance of the proper position of the case during normal usage, but readily allows movement of the case when desired, for example, to perform maintenance. The features of claim 18 are also not suggested by the cited references, and therefore, claim 18 is also in condition for allowance.

The feature of providing a lock to selectively lock and unlock the case in the rearward position is also set forth in claims depending from claims 1 and 2. By way of example, see claims 14-17. The present dependent claims also include numerous additional features which

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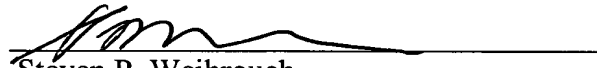
are not disclosed or suggested by the cited references, particularly in combination with the features of the claims from which they depend.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance for claims 1-20 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, he or she is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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